



The Cleveland Museum of Art

For Immediate Release
Mar. 29, 2000

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EXHIBITION OF 19TH-CENTURY FRENCH PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY COMPLEMENTS MAJOR IMPRESSIONIST SHOW

CLEVELAND — To complement the major exhibition **Faces of Impressionism: Portraits from American Collections** (May 28–July 30, 2000), the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) will present **19th-Century French Portrait Photography from the Cleveland Museum of Art**, on view May 27 through August 9, 2000. Drawn from CMA's permanent collection, the show features 22 works by 19 artists, including outstanding pieces by Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, 1802–1870), Étienne Carjat (1828–1906), and André Adolphe Eugène Disdéri (1819–1889). The show will be installed in gallery 102 outside the museum café. **Admission to this photography exhibition is free.** (Tickets are required for the major show.)

Tom Hinson, curator of contemporary art and photography, has organized the exhibition. He comments, "The desire to represent human form was an early impulse in Western art, and, since its inception, photography has involved portraiture. During the early- to mid-1800s, critical opinion was that French photographers excelled in portrait-making. Indeed, their remarkable level of technical skill and artistic sensibility is clearly expressed in the photographs in this exhibition. One is captivated by the aesthetic quality and historic record these creative photographs provide."

Photography gained popularity because it allowed an individual to capture a likeness quickly, precisely, and economically. Three of the earliest, most widely used processes of making portraits are represented in the show: daguerreotypes, calotype (or paper) negatives, and wet collodion negatives.

The daguerreotype, invented in 1839 by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, was the dominant technique for commercial portrait photography during the 1840s. The process provided a unique, positive picture with striking detail on a polished, silver-coated copper plate; most were about pocket-sized. Camille Dolard's (1810–after 1884) *Self-Portrait in Painting Studio* (about 1843), featured in this exhibition, is only one of three known full-size plate (about 6 x 8 inches) self-portraits created by the artist.

In contrast with the daguerreotype, the revolutionary calotype technique (patented in 1841) produced a paper negative from which an unlimited number of positive salted paper prints could be created. CMA's recently acquired print *Henriette Robert* (1852–53) by Louis-Rémy Robert (1811–1882), typifies the atmospheric, soft-focus effect this process yielded.

Wet collodion negatives and albumen prints emerged in 1851, combining the fine, sharp detail of daguerreotypes and the reproducibility of calotypes. Albumen prints in the exhibition include an embellished portrait of an *Unknown Male Sitter* (about 1860) by the noted commercial photographer and sculptor Antoine-Samuel-Adam-Salomon (1818–1881).

Nadar, one of the best known 19th-century French portraitists, is represented in the show by *Alexandre Dumas père* (1855). Nadar's famous image of his friend, author of *The Three Musketeers* and the *Count of Monte Cristo*, shows Dumas confronting the camera with a direct and lively expression. Carjat's *Sarah Bernhardt in "Zaire" by Voltaire* (1874) depicts the celebrity actress dressed for one of her roles.

Disdéri patented the *carte-de-visite* in 1854 — a collection of separate images on a single negative, produced by using multiple lenses and a sliding plate holder. His *Monsieur Merlen* (1861) is an uncut *carte-de-visite* proof print.

Another image, *Courtyard with Painters* (late 1860s), by one of the many talented unknown photographers, offers a stunning example of painters at work outdoors. A man, presumably an innkeeper, looks intently into the camera, while a painter works quietly in the background, his subject hidden from view. Located on the left side, another painter, perhaps either finished with his painting or poking fun at the photographer, has placed his painting upside-down on his easel.

For more information on the CMA and its events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.clemusart.com.

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